

पितृदिवस (Pitri divas)

FATHERS DAY

Etymology of the word “father”

The word ‘father’ is tracked down from Old English *fæder* (of Germanic origin), to Dutch *vader* and German *vater*, and from an Indo-European root shared by Latin *pater*, Greek *patēr*, French *père* and Sanskrit पितर (*pitara*).

The word पिता (*Pitaa*) is derived from the Sanskrit root word पा रक्षणे (*Paa Rakshane*).

यः पाति सर्वान स पिता (*Yah paati sarvaan sa pitaa*), that is a father (*pitaa*) is one who does his utmost to provide protective care to his children. A father is duty-bound to impart true knowledge to them, look after their development physical, mental/moral/spiritual and social development, and inculcate in them noble thoughts, speech and actions.

English dictionaries explain the word “father” as

- 1) a man who gives care and protection to his child or children, usually the male parent in the ancestry or who legally adopt a child or who provides foster care to a child;
- 2) old venerable characters and important figures in the origin and early history of something - initiators, founders, inventors, creators, authors, designers, etc. Common examples are father of the nation, father of democracy.

Father, with “F” in block letters, refer to Eeshvar (God) as the one who creates and sustains the universe.

Father’s Day & Fathers’ Day

- ▲ With the apostrophe before the S, Father's Day “belongs” to each individual father.
- ▲ With the apostrophe after the S, the meaning slightly changes. That would celebrate fathers as a collective, honoring all fathers on the occasion over our own father.

In fact the father is not to be remembered and revered on one day but on all days during our lifetime. We need be thankful to the Creator for the new dawn ...another day adding to our lifetime

Fathers’ Day was commemorated in the US in 1909 after a mining tragedy. In 1910 Dodd initiated a movement complementary to Mothers’ Day, celebrating her father, a widower and Civil War veteran named William Jackson Smart, who raised six children on his own after his wife died during childbirth.

The Celebrations were hyped through massive advertising from 1949 onwards, to ignite consumption in the post-World War 2 morose economic situation. Over \$15 billion spent on Father’s Day gifts in 2017 in USA and \$24 billion on Mother's Day gifts like flowers, apparel, dinner, and spa days.

It's a great day for the humble/simple greeting ...to hold in highest regard the contribution that our own father has made to our life not only for some moments ...but every day through our lifetime. We need be grateful for the hand on our shoulders, love (silent), inspiration, wisdom, and fun - play, jokes, long walks and drives.

Vedic philosophy enunciates पितृयज्ञ *Pitri Yajna* as one of the five daily duties of every human being ...to pay tribute ...to care for the elderly and benefit from the sharing of their learning and life experiences.

The Sanskrit word पितर *pitar* has an extended meaning and includes ईश्वर *Eeshvar* (God -the Supreme Being), पिता *Pitaa* (father), पतामह *Pitaamaha* (grandfather), प्रपितामह *Prapitaamaha* (great-grandfather), माता *Maataa* (mother), पितामही *Pitaamahee* (grandmother), प्रपितामह्ययः *Prapitaamahyayah* (great-grandmother), the Aachaarya (guru, teacher who walks-the-talk), and elderly, learned, spiritual, righteous, impartial and ethical persons.

पितृयज्ञ *Pitri Yajna* has two components: (i) श्राद्ध *Shraaddh*, and (ii) तर्पण *Tarpan*.

श्राद्ध *Shraaddh* is attending to and caring for the welfare of parents. तर्पण *Tarpan* is to provide parents with health-promoting food, beverages, clothing, medicines and other requisites as well as spend quality time with them so that they be ever satisfied and content.

Why are Shraaddh and Tarpan meant for living beings, never for the dead?

- According to पुनर्जन्म *Punarjanma*, the soul is reborn. If ever that soul has to return for Shraaddh and Tarpan, it will have to leave the new body, which amounts to ...distant killing and obviously negative karma on our part. Moreover no soul cannot perform any action without a body.
- Upon attaining मोक्ष *moksha*, मुक्ति *mukti* (salvation or liberation from the cycle of birth and death), souls enjoy the bliss of Eeshvar (God) which has no touch of pains, sorrows and afflictions ...no need to come back for food and drinks that satiates for 3-4 hours.

The most appropriate way to pay homage to our पितर *pitar* (parents, the elderly, learned, etc.) is to care for them in their lifetime, to live up to the ideals of righteous living and be in turn a role model to our children, that is – be noble in thoughts, speech, deeds, character and nature.

Present-day world celebrates specific dates as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Family Day, Siblings Day, Senior Citizens day, Grandparents Day, etc.



Parents are special ...not for a day ...for ever and ever.

Parents ...

Clean up the mess and care for us as new-borns,
Spend sleepless nights to put us to sleep,
Calm our screaming and sulking,
Hold our hands to start the walk of life,
Provide support when we fall, and
Thrill at our achievements.

And, the mess crops up...

As we grow, our parents grow older
Yet, they strive to give us the best.
We take for granted what parents really do,
We ignore the upbringing, the guidance,
Often, we see them as embarrassment in our circles.

We get a job, a house, a family and children,
Then only, as parents
We realize the role of our parents in our making.
Before going too deep to be saved,
Let us
Cherish the present with our parents now,
Honour parents for what they do,
As they are the ones that raised us.

Acharya Bramdeo

Atlanta, GA, USA (Cell: +1-770-666-3435)